



The Sixty-third Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art

2,515th Concert

Henning Kraggerud, *violinist*

Helge Kjekshus, *pianist*

Presented in cooperation with
the Embassy of Norway

12 December 2004

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that concerts now begin at 6:30 pm.
Late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

The National Gallery is pleased to present this concert in
cooperation with the Embassy of Norway as an event in the
eighth annual cultural festival, *Norwegian Christmas at
Union Station*. In addition to its gala inaugural event on
November 30, 2004, at which Her Highness Princess Märtha
Louise lit the 8,000-light Christmas tree at Union Station,
the festival offers a wide range of events at various venues in
Washington, all designed to highlight the traditions of Norway,
its culture, and the accomplishments of its people.

2,515th Concert

12 December 2004, 6:30 pm

The Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 in G Major (“Regen”), Op. 78 (1876)

Vivace ma non troppo

Adagio

Allegro molto moderato

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2 in A Major (“Thun”), Op. 100 (1886)

Allegro amabile

Andante tranquillo; vivace

Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108 (1889)

Allegro

Adagio

Un poco presto e con sentimento

Presto agitato

The Musicians

Born in Oslo in 1973, violinist Henning Kraggerud has at an early age achieved the status of one of Scandinavia's most important musicians. He has performed with the Oslo Philharmonic, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, the Prague Symphony, the Stockholm Radio Orchestra, and the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester, as well as many British orchestras, including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Halle Orchestra, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Among the world-renowned conductors with whom Kraggerud enjoys a close working relationship are Mariss Jansons and Kurt Sanderling.

A committed chamber musician, Henning Kraggerud performs regularly at many of the major international festivals, collaborating with musicians such as Stephen Kovacevich, Kathryn Stott, Leif Ove Andsnes, Jeffrey Kahane, Truls Mørk, and Martha Argerich. In the spring of 2004, Kraggerud was artist-in-residence at the Bergen International Music Festival, where he performed recitals, chamber music, and concertos. Later in 2004 he performed in the Young Masters series at London's Wigmore Hall.

In addition to this recital, his first at the National Gallery, Kraggerud will perform on every continent except Antarctica in the 2004–2005 season. He will be a concerto soloist with the Norwegian Radio Symphony Orchestra on its next Asian tour and will play his debut performances with the Strasbourg Philharmonic, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, and the Baltimore Symphony (in May 2005, at the new Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, Maryland). In spring 2005 he joins Leif Ove Andsnes in his "Perspectives Season" at Carnegie Hall.

Kraggerud enjoys a fine reputation as leader and soloist of chamber orchestras and sinfoniettas. He is an innovative improviser and composer, performing many of his own cadenzas and arrangements in concert, and several of his compositions have been performed at festivals worldwide. He has recorded three critically acclaimed CDs for Naxos: the Grieg violin sonatas (with Helge Kjekshus), a set of Norwegian pieces for violin and orchestra, and the violin concertos of Jean Sibelius and Christian Sinding with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Kraggerud provided the violin sound track for a soon to be released television and cinema documentary about the life of Norwegian violin virtuoso and composer Ole Bull (1810–1880). A member of the faculty of the Barratt-Dues Conservatory of Music and a recipient of Norway's prestigious Grieg Prize, Henning Kraggerud appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with IMG Artists of New York City.

Pianist Helge Kjekshus graduated in 1990 from the Norwegian State Academy of Music with the highest honors. He continued his piano studies with Jiri Hlinka at the Grieg Academy of Music in Bergen, Norway, and with Boris Berman at Yale University. In a review from the Bergen International Festival, the *Washington Post* hailed Kjekshus as “a pianist who must be counted as one of the festival's most exciting discoveries.” He has performed with the Copenhagen Philharmonic and other major orchestras throughout Scandinavia and the Baltic States. He has also appeared as soloist with the Bern Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, and the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra. He has performed solo and duo recitals in international music festivals, including the Bergen International Festival, the Risor Chamber Music Festival, and Kissinger Summer. A devoted chamber musician, he has performed with Henning Kraggerud, Ana Chumachenko, Paul Meyer, Truls Mørk, and Boris Pergamenchikov. Recipient of the Grieg Prize, Kjekshus is also in demand as a conductor of chamber and symphony orchestras.

Program Notes

One of the most famous and productive collaborative friendships between musicians of the nineteenth century was the one that brought together Johannes Brahms and the violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907). The two men became acquainted in the 1850s in Hannover, where Joachim was a member of the resident string quartet that premiered a number of Brahms' early chamber works. Joachim is credited with inspiring Brahms to write his three violin sonatas and his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* and with having influenced their character, since both the performer and the composer valued tone production and musical integrity over mechanical virtuosity.

As he did with all his chamber music, Brahms looked to classical models in forming his sonatas for violin and piano, reflected in the number of movements and sequence of tempos that are presented in each of them. Brahms introduced some modifications to the classical sonata, among them an expansion and mellowing of the scherzo and complex rhythms that were unknown in earlier music. The preference of Brahms and his favorite violinist for moderate tempi is indicated by his use of such terms as *non troppo*, *amabile*, *tranquillo*, and *grazioso* to modify the basic tempo markings. It is only in his third and last sonata that the composer opens the emotional floodgates, calling upon the players to finish the work *presto agitato* (fast and in an agitated manner).

The nickname of the first sonata, *Regen* (Rain), refers to a song Brahms wrote in 1873 (*Regenlied*), a portion of which is heard in the first movement. The nickname of the second, *Thun*, is the name of the town in Switzerland where Brahms was staying when he completed it in the summer of 1886. The third sonata was also written in Thun but has never been assigned a nickname, perhaps because it has a sufficient identity as a masterpiece among violin sonatas. It represents an apotheosis for the composer and rises to a level of harmonic intensity and rhythmic complexity that is above that of the earlier sonatas. It presents equal challenges to both the violinist and the pianist and reveals the rugged passion of which Brahms was capable, especially in the first and last movements. One of the unique achievements of this work is the creation of intensely passionate music without resorting to key changes, which were the most common source of dramatic tension in romantic music. In the first movement, there is a forty-six-bar passage in which the bass note remains the same (pedal point). Both instruments shift abruptly from one tonality to another above the pedal point, creating and releasing harmonic tension without changing the key. Brahms and Joachim played the premiere performance of the third sonata in Vienna on February 13, 1889.

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